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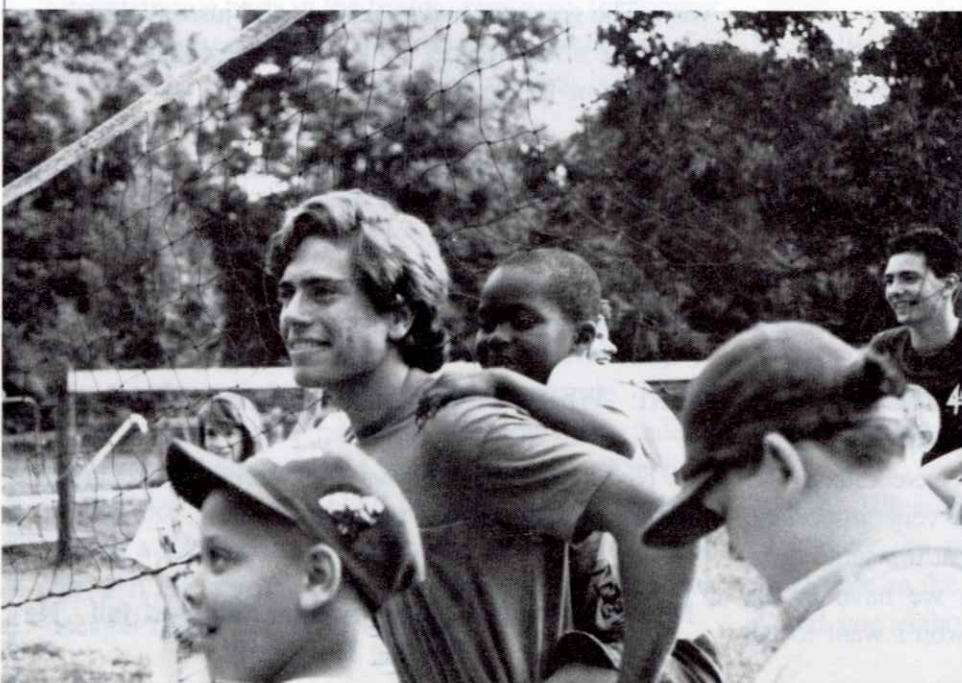
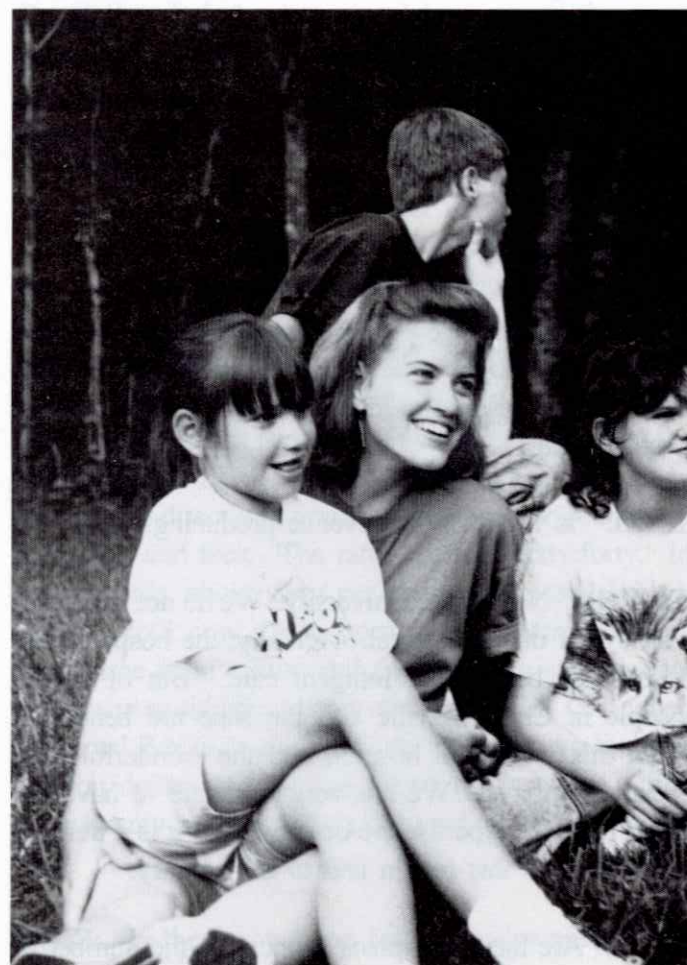


# Camp Holiday Trails

Some people might label them handicapped or disabled, but no child at Camp Holiday Trails (CHT) is merely known by their illness. There are kids with literally all kinds of disorders, including diabetes, cystic fibrosis, hearing impairments, hemophilia, cancer, and heart and lung conditions. CHT gives these children with special medical conditions the opportunity to be "kids" as they learn about themselves and the other campers.

This summer I went back to visit this special camp[where I had once been a camper] spending a week with the kids, as I reminisced about years gone by. As I talked with the staff and the medical team, I learned a great deal about the history of the camp, its founders, and the first special kids that came to CHT. Dr. Elsa Paulsen, a diabetologist at the University of Virginia, is the chief medical director at the camp and essentially the primary founder of CHT. When I was a camper she had befriended me and introduced me to UVa. This summer, as a UVa student, I had a strange sense of deja vue as I sat and discussed the history of CHT with her.

Dr. Paulsen began the program in the summer of 1970 as a diabetic camp, which soon led to the incorporation in the fall of 1971 of Camp Holiday Trails. The camp was named by a diabetic, Charles Haney, who now



is a contractor in Charlottesville. Through generous donations, the camp was able to buy the land and start building in 1972. Although the camp did not officially open until 1974, the program was able to have kids every summer. With the help of a major donation, a Ming Dynasty vase from former Ambassador to Malaysia Charles Baldwin, the camp was able to finance the dining hall for the camp. Soon afterwards, the Kresgy Corporation provided money for the infirmary, Med-Korner. In 1976, The Pugh family donated "Bunk 11," the staff cabin. While the Army Corps of Engineers built the dock at the lake,

the Perry Foundation built the swimming pool. The last addition to the camp was a ropes course designed by Sylvia Shirley, a former camp director, in 1985.

Interestingly, the camp director for the past two summers, Linda Garrettson, was a student of Ms. Shirley, while she was at William and Mary. Linda, 23, has worked in camps since she was a teenager, spending most of her summers at Catocin Quaker Camp in western Maryland. A recent biology graduate from W&M, Linda is considering physical therapy, medical school, or other health science-related fields.

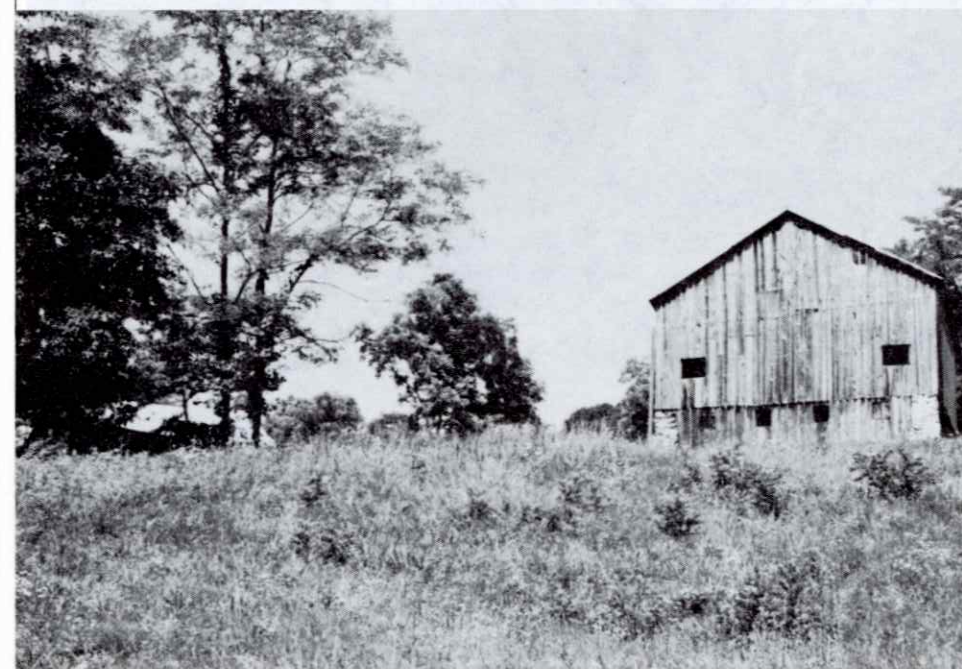
"The atmosphere [at CHT] can take overprotected children into independence and help enrich their skills at caring for themselves," Garrettson says. She points out that these children often need time for themselves, to learn how to work around their [medical] problems. What Garrettson said she likes most about CHT is that "it gives me 70 people I can hug every day."

Two of the counselors, Darby Marshall and Catherine Ismay, are both recent UVa graduates, CLAS '89 and '90 respectively. They helped me really get to know the kids, as I came back to camp to visit each day. Darby, a pre-medical student, will attend UVa Medical

School next year. His experiences with these children's medical conditions will help his understanding of disease pathology, empathy and compassion.

Darby's co-counselors, Kevin Steele, 18, of Ellicott City, Maryland and Chris Collins of Warwick, New York had, like me, been campers when they were growing up. Although they have had cystic fibrosis since birth, Kevin and Chris have led incredibly physical lifestyles. "Running has been therapy as well as my passion since I was a little boy," Kevin recalls. Amazingly enough, running has kept his lungs healthy, and unlike most CF patients, Kevin does not need the physical therapy given daily to most patients. Chris also has not required therapy, except for the few times when he had to be hospitalized. Chris and Kevin both started college this fall. Kevin, now a music/voice major at James Madison University, is an exceptional tenor. He was one of the camp's favorite entertainers. He was also a favorite of all the teenage girls...

One of these teenage girls, Katie Dorrer, 13, is also a cystic fibrosis patient. However, Katie, is not quite as fortunate as Kevin, at least not physically. She goes for therapy twice a day, which consists of a 35 minute session of gentle back and







father, are a close Army family. Katie says she enjoys school, and particularly likes American History. In a few years, Katie hopes to attend college at UMD or Trinity College. She wants to be able to stay close to her family. She is an exceptional young woman.

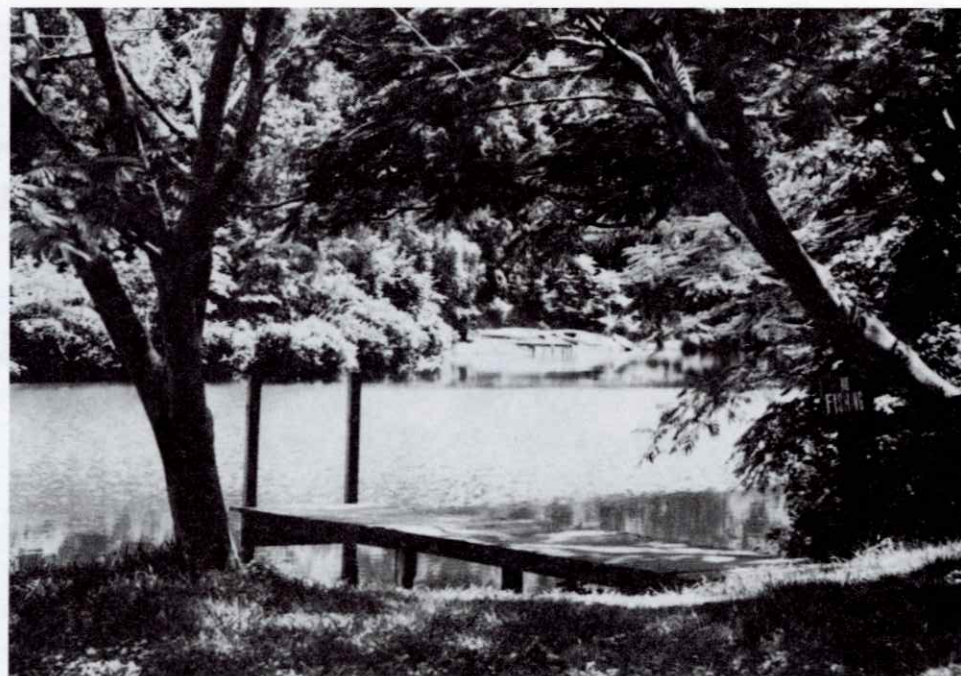
Two young hemophilic campers, Chris Race and Jason Cooke, both 14, remind me of myself at that age. I was about their age when I attended camp as a young, severe hemophiliac aspiring to someday become a hematologist. Chris, a former Virginia Beach local, also hopes to someday become a pediatric hematologist and help take care of hemophiliacs, like us. Chris makes straight A's even though he has severe classic hemophilia, factor VIII deficiency. Jason is not sure what he will do after high school, but he does want to go to college. His brother, Wesley, 12, also attended camp this past summer. Although he also has severe hemophilia, Wes is very healthy and active while Jason is often injured, and as a result, less active.

One of the other hemophiliacs at camp, Nate Wilkins, 13, of Hampton, Virginia, has moderate to severe hemophilia, and he enjoys CHT immensely. Camp is one very special opportunity for hemophiliacs to play together without fear of major injury, because all the kids know their limitations. Their brand of football is strictly non-contact. As well, these boys were able to enjoy basketball, swimming, canoeing, hiking, and camping out overnight. For many of these boys, it was their first experience at some of these activities.

What makes CHT so terrific is not its tremen-

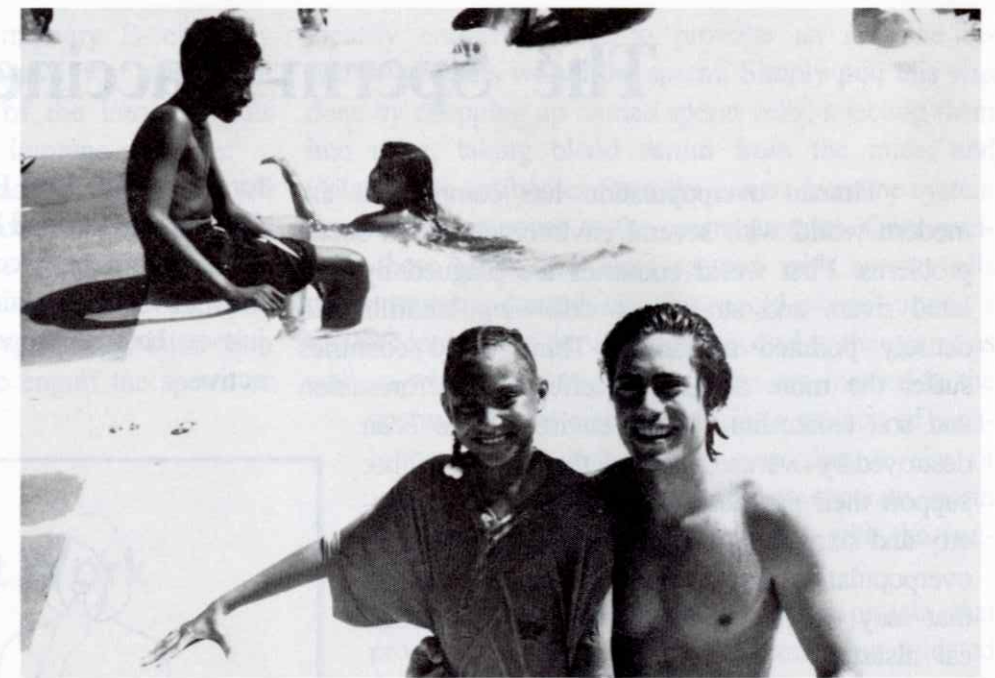
chest pounding, followed by using her nebulizer. She explained to me most proficiently how her nebulizer worked, explaining that "it was a special machine that uses ultrasonic waves to break down her medicine into microscopic droplets which she inhales for 20-30 minutes, to help enhance coughing and help her get rid of the build-up of mucus that constantly occurs in her lungs. Katie has an amazing medical acuity for her age. She understands her health condition probably better than most of the physicians that treat her. She spends two to three weeks in the hospital every two months as she undergoes antibiotic therapy to help keep her damaged lungs functional.

Katie is now a 9th grade student at Good Counsel Catholic High School in Silver Spring, Maryland. She and her three older sisters, along with her mother and



dous medical support, or its great activities, or even its great staff - though all of these are inherently CHT. What makes CHT so special is that these kids get the opportunity to live freely and independently from their illness, as much as they can, for two weeks out of the year. By sharing their common experiences of chronic illness, they also learn about each other, as friends, as people, and as individuals.

**Eric Howell is a fifth-year Biochemistry major.**



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